

FRIENDS IN COUNCIL

It is good in *Discourse*, and Speech of Conversation, to vary, and intermingle Speech of the present Occasion with Arguments, Tales with Reasons, Asking of Questions, with Telling of Opinions, and Jest with Earnest : For it is a dull Thing to Tire, and, as we say now, to Jade, anything too far

BACON, *Essay of Discourse*.

FRIENDS IN COUNCIL

BY

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EDITED BY

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PREFACE

THIS volume, with the exception of the essay on Slavery, which would now be out of date, comprises all the essays of the late Sir A. Helps contained in the First Series of *Friends in Council*.

The essays present great variety in subject, dealing as they do, sometimes with social, and sometimes with moral questions. The author adopted a method suggested to him by a passage in Bacon's *Essay of Discourse*, of submitting the essays to discussion by an imaginary company of friends. The individuality of these 'friends' is so well maintained throughout that they become real friends to the reader.

Though these essays were written nearly sixty years ago the reader cannot fail to be struck by their note of modernity—due to the fact that the author was far in advance of his age. The essays abound with thought and suggestion, and the conversations afford play for the writer's genial and graceful humour.

Many of the essays on social reform—a subject ever near the author's heart—deal with matters in which much still remains to be done, whilst others treat of moral questions of perennial interest to mankind.

INTRODUCTION

ARTHUR HELPS was born in 1813. He was the fourth son of Thomas Helps, by Anne Plucknett, only daughter of the Rev. Charles Plucknett of Wincanton. Thomas Helps was the head of a large mercantile house in the City of London.

At an early age Arthur Helps showed marked ability—he could read Greek at eight years of age. He was sent to a preparatory school at Balham, and from thence to Eton, where he was one of the founders of the school magazine, which numbered among its contributors many boys who were distinguished in after life. From Eton he went to Trinity College, Cambridge. He took his B.A. degree in 1835, when he came out thirty-first wrangler, and his M.A. in 1839. He was elected one of the ‘Apostles’. His health was not very robust whilst at the University, which may perhaps account for his not having taken higher honours, as also the fact that he devoted himself to general reading rather than to special studies. Whilst at Cambridge he wrote *Thoughts in the Cloister and the Crowd*, a series of reflections and aphorisms.

On leaving Cambridge he became private secretary to Mr. Spring Rice (afterwards Lord Monteagle), Chancellor of the Exchequer in Lord Melbourne’s administration. He held this appointment until 1840. In 1836 he married Miss Bessie Fuller, daughter of Captain Fuller, by Elizabeth Blennerhassett.

In 1840 he went to Ireland, as private secretary to Lord Morpeth (afterwards Lord Carlisle), Chief Secretary for Ireland. He remained in Ireland until 1841,

when he was appointed one of the Commissioners for the settlement of Danish claims, arising from the bombardment of Copenhagen.

At the fall of Lord Melbourne's administration he left official life, and took up literary work; at first chiefly with a view to the improvement of the social condition of the masses, and the better sanitation of London and large towns. He joined Charles Kingsley in issuing a series of papers called *Politics for the People*, and at the time of the Chartist troubles in 1848 he went out as a special constable, afterwards embodying his thoughts on the subject in a pamphlet entitled *A letter from one of the special constables called out to keep the peace*. About this time he bought a house in Hampshire, to which he retired, devoting himself to literary work. It was during this period that much of his best work was done.

In 1854, when an outbreak of cholera was expected in the summer, he was greatly interested in promoting a 'Health Fund for London'. It was proposed 'to institute, in some of the worst districts of London containing a population of no less than 200,000 inhabitants, a system of efficient, sanitary action, stimulating, advising, instructing and assisting the Local Boards'.

The answers to the appeal made for funds to carry out this project were, however, unsatisfactory, and the scheme was abandoned.

His country house, called Vernon Hill, Admiral Vernon having resided there, stood on a hill commanding a fine view of the Isle of Wight, with the village of Bishop's Waltham and the ruins of Waltham Abbey in the foreground. It was in the neighbouring woods, and on the downs, that many of the walks described in *Friends in Council* took place in the company of guests, among whom were Charles Kingsley, the Doyles, John Hullah, G. H. Lewis, W. G. Clark, and many others of light and leading: a pleasing recollection at this day to me is that of a walk with Emerson and my father, and a faint recollection of a big man named

Carlyle, who was confused in my mind with another big man called Lord Carlisle (whose secretary my father had been in Ireland).

Arthur Helps occupied his leisure largely in studying the social condition of his poorer neighbours, and in endeavouring to make their lives brighter. He became interested first in arboriculture and then in farming, and eventually acquired some land adjoining his small estate in which a bed of what was considered to be very valuable clay was discovered. He thought he saw his way to the realization of long-cherished views as to the carrying out of a great industry, and a company was formed to carry out his scheme for the working of the clay. This undertaking, however, unfortunately resulted in a great loss of money to himself and those friends who had been associated with him.

In 1860 Lord Palmerston, who had previously offered him the Chair of Poetry at Oxford, offered him the Clerkship of the Privy Council, vacant through the resignation of the Hon. W. L. Bathurst. Arthur Helps accepted this appointment, and held it until his death, which occurred in 1875, from an attack of pleurisy following upon a cold caught in attending a levee.

In 1864 the honorary degree of D.C.L. was conferred on him by the University of Oxford; in 1871 he was made C.B., and in the following year K.C.B.

As the permanent head of the Privy Council Office, which from its constitution is brought into relation with the chief departments of State, he saw much of official life and of official business, and was brought into close personal relations with the chief members of each administration. Among these he made many personal friends; perhaps the most intimate in later years were W. E. Forster and Lord Granville.

He had no party bias, for his habit of thought led to independence of judgment, but he was inclined to Liberalism, and was what was then called a 'Liberal-

Conservative'. He was treated with equal confidence by the chief members of either party, and his judgment and opinions were often sought by men of the most opposite views.

During his tenure of office considerable additions were made to the statutory powers of the Privy Council Office. A supplementary department for dealing with the infectious diseases of animals was established, and, as Chairman of the 'Transit of Animals Committee', he had the, to him, great satisfaction of initiating measures for regulating the carriage of animals by sea and land, which measures have done much to lessen the sufferings of cattle and to ensure them humane treatment, both at home and abroad.

In the performance of his duties as Clerk of the Privy Council, Arthur Helps was necessarily brought into personal communication with the Queen and the Prince Consort, who both soon recognized his chivalrous and faithful nature, and his mental powers.

In 1862 Her Majesty requested him to undertake the editing of "*The principal Speeches and Addresses of His Royal Highness the Prince Consort.*" His introduction to this work, giving "some outlines" of the Prince Consort's character, was accepted as a masterly sketch of one of the most remarkable men of the time. In 1868 Her Majesty entrusted him with the editing of *Leaves from our Journal in the Highlands*, a work which did much to endear Her Majesty to her subjects.

Indeed, it may be said that until his death Sir Arthur Helps was honoured by being regarded by Her Majesty as one of her most trusted friends and counsellors. The following extract, from the *Court Journal*, shows the estimation in which he was held—"By the death of Sir Arthur Helps the Queen has sustained a loss which has caused her great affliction, and Her Majesty has lost a true and devoted friend."

When his losses at his country estate had obliged him to give up Vernon Hill, Her Majesty offered him

a house at Kew Gardens, where he lived until his death.

His chief literary work may be roughly classified under three heads: first, those writings in which he sought directly or indirectly to influence the thoughtful and those in authority in the social and economic conditions of the masses, and in the hygienic conditions of large towns; secondly, his historical writings; and thirdly, those writings which are the outcome of his wide and varied experience of government, men, and affairs. In making this classification it must be said, however, that the author never lost sight of the aims first mentioned: he even used fiction as a medium for them.

Under the first head fall the *Claims of Labour*, in which he treats of the relation of employers to employed, and the social condition of the labouring classes, and suggests remedial measures. It is interesting to note how many of the reforms he advocated have been carried out, often on the lines he indicated, and how the very words and phrases of his discourse have become a part of the language of the Social Reformer.

Next in order come *Friends in Council* (in two series), *Companions of My Solitude*, in which may be found some of the deepest and tenderest thoughts of the writer, *Conversations on War and Culture*, and *Social Pressure*.

In no one of these does the author confine himself to the aims I have mentioned: in each book there are essays touching on various aspects of life and conduct.

Secondly come the historical writings, *The Conquerors of the New World and their Bondsmen*, followed by *The Spanish Conquest in America*. The latter work, to which the author devoted many years' labour, entailed much research and investigation into Spanish MS., and necessitated several journeys to Spain, to study records at Madrid and Barcelona.

The subject of slavery had a peculiar interest for him,

and finding when writing his first book that the question of the distribution of races in the New World was intimately connected with it, he was led to enter upon his most important work, *The Spanish Conquest in America*. The following, taken from the dedication to Dr. Phelps, Master of Sydney College, Cambridge, an old college friend, indicates his purpose in writing this history,—‘If the work should afford the least aid or enlightenment to those who would legislate wisely upon matters connected with slavery, or colonization, neither you or I should regret any labour that has been expended on it.’

That the author should have devoted many years of his life to the writing of such a work, mainly in the hope of influencing America and his countrymen in the subject of slavery, would appear to be somewhat unpractical, but he was ever something of a visionary and idealist, and there is little doubt that having once embarked on the subject, he was led on by his interest and enthusiasm to enlarge upon it. His extreme love of accuracy may account to some extent for the length and fulness with which the different parts of his subject are treated. On this point it may not be out of place to quote from an obituary notice in the *Athenæum*, written by one who knew him well. ‘If ever there was a writer, in reference to whom it could be said that genius and industry were convertible terms, it was he. No expenditure of toil or money did he ever allow to stand between him and a truth of whatever kind. Were the only copy of a manuscript at Simancas, to Simancas he would go; were a book inaccessible, save by purchase, he would buy it; were it written in a language he did not know—bitter experience had given him an absolute distrust of translation—he would set to work to study that language. The world is so much accustomed to associate learning with dulness, that many of Sir Arthur Helps’ most loving and constant readers will be as much surprised to find the former of these quali-

ties attributed to him, as they would be the latter. Yet, in the widest sense of the word, he was one of the most learned men of his age. He was, what is generally understood by an elegant if not a great scholar. He had the use, and was well read in, the literatures of four living languages, besides his own.'

This history, to which he gave so much of his best, met with only a *succès d'estime*. It was thought, I believe, that the author's method of stopping to analyse character and motives, and to philosophize was out of keeping with the character and dignity of the narrative: perhaps, too, the very completeness with which the various threads of the story were treated, may have wearied the reader. Be this as it may, it would be difficult to find a more vivid and fascinating narrative than that of the taking of Mexico by the Spaniards, and one of the foremost of American historians has described the work as 'a book that it does the soul good to read'.

Biographies of Columbus, Pizarro, Las Casas and Cortes were subsequently compiled from this history, and, with some supplementing, published separately: these met with a very favourable reception.

Under the third head come those writings which treat of government and public business. These, in chronological order, are, *Essays Written in the Intervals of Business, Organization in Daily Life*, and *Thoughts upon Government*.

Other works, which cannot be classed under any of the three heads I have taken, are, the historical plays (tragedies) *Henry the Second* and *Catherine Douglas*, *Oulita*, a drama, *Casimir Maremma* and *Ivan de Biron*, both romances, *Realma*, in which the development of a primitive race of the 'bronze age' is traced and some features of our civilization, and men of the day are depicted under a thin disguise, *The Life and Labours of Mr. Brassey*—undertaken at the request of his son—*Brevia*, a collection of short essays and aphorisms, and *Animals and their Masters*, in

INTRODUCTION

which the cruelties inflicted upon dumb creatures are treated of. He also contributed many articles to *Fraser's Magazine* in the Sixties, and, in consequence of his wide knowledge of men, he was often called upon to render the last tribute to some great man. Among these memorials may be mentioned those on the Prince Consort, Lord Clarendon, Charles Kingsley, and Charles Dickens.

The keynote of all Sir Arthur Helps' work, apart from his historical writings, was 'progress'. Again and again he returned to the social questions of his earlier writings, pressing home his points more and more vigorously with the widened experience of advancing years. As has been said by Sir Theodore Martin in his notice in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 'no man was ever more eager to do what he might towards obviating or curing the folly, stupidity, lethargy and selfishness to which so much of the misery, the ill-health, and the sin of the world is due'.

There can be no doubt that his writings, abounding as they do with practical wisdom and suggestion, have awakened response in many minds, have stirred the conscience of the easy-going, and helped forward the cause of social reform.

To some, however, the very simplicity and easy familiarity of his style, and the seeming obviousness of many of the arguments brought forward in discussion, have given the impression that they were only seeing their own thoughts well clothed; but the author knew his audience and how to reach them, and the *ars celare artem* was his in an eminent degree.

Some of his writings have fulfilled their purpose, but there remain many others which will be of interest to social reformers and students of human nature to all time.

It may be wondered why, holding such strong views as he did, and possessed as he was of many of the qualifications of an orator, he did not enter Parliament; but as is truly said of him in the notice I have quoted,

'he was of altogether too fine a fibre for the hard hitting of the political arena'.

Nothing need be said here of the author's nature and characteristics, for they are revealed in the spirit of tolerance, the reasonableness, and the sympathy shown in his writings: the very simplicity of his style carries with it the stamp of sincerity: of him it may justly be said '*le style est l'homme même*'. In conclusion, it may be added, without any exaggeration, that no man of his time laboured with more earnestness and purity of purpose for the good of his fellow-creatures.

LONDON,

January, 1917.

C. A. HELPS.

FRIENDS IN COUNCIL

BOOK I

CHAPTER I

NONE but those who, like myself, have once lived in intellectual society, and have then been deprived of it for years, can appreciate the delight of finding it again. Not that I have any right to complain, if I were fated to live as a recluse for ever. I can add little, or nothing, to the pleasure of any company; I like to listen rather than to talk; and when anything apposite does occur to me, it is generally the day after the conversation has taken place. I do not, however, love good talk the less for these defects of mine; and I console myself with thinking that I sustain the part of a judicious listener, not always an easy one.

Great, then, was my delight at hearing last year, that my old pupil, Milverton, had taken a house which had long been vacant in our neighbourhood. To add to my pleasure, his college friend, Ellesmere, the great lawyer, also an old pupil of mine, came to us frequently in the course of the autumn. Milverton was at that time writing some essays which he occasionally read to Ellesmere and myself. The conversations which then took place I am proud to say that I have chronicled. I think they must be interesting to the world in general, though of course not so much so as to me.

Milverton and Ellesmere were my favourite pupils. Many is the heartache I have had at finding that those

boys, with all their abilities, would do nothing at the University. But it was in vain to urge them. I grieve to say that neither of them had any ambition of the right kind. Once I thought I had stimulated Ellesmere to the proper care and exertion : when, to my astonishment and vexation, going into his rooms about a month before an examination, I found that, instead of getting up his subjects, like a reasonable man, he was absolutely endeavouring to invent some new method for proving something which had been proved before in a hundred ways. Over this he had wasted two days, and from that moment I saw it was useless to waste any more of my time and patience in urging a scholar so indocile for the beaten path.

What tricks he and Milverton used to play me, pretending not to understand my demonstration of some mathematical problem, inventing all manner of subtle difficulties, and declaring they could not go on while these stumbling-blocks lay in their way ! But I am getting into college gossip, which may in no way delight my readers. And I am fancying, too, that Milverton and Ellesmere are the boys they were to me ; but I am now the child to them. During the years that I have been quietly living here, they have become versed in the ways of the busy world. And though they never think of asserting their superiority, I feel it, and am glad to do so.

My readers would, perhaps, like me to tell them something of the characters of Ellesmere and Milverton ; but it would ill become me to give that insight into them which I, their college friend and tutor, imagine I have obtained. Their friendship I could never understand. It was not on the surface very warm, and their congeniality seemed to result more from one or two large common principles of thought, than from any peculiar similarity of taste, or from great affection on either side. Yet I should wrong their friendship if I were to represent it otherwise than a most true-hearted one ; more so, perhaps, than some

of softer texture. What needs be seen of them individually will be by their words, which I hope I have in the main retained.

The place where we generally met in fine weather was on the lawn before Milverton's house. It was an eminence which commanded a series of valleys sloping towards the sea. And, as the sea was not more than nine miles off, it was a matter of frequent speculation with us whether the landscape was bounded by air or water. In the first valley was a little town of red brick houses, with poplars coming up amongst them. The ruins of a castle, and some water which, in olden times, had been the lake in 'the pleasaunce', were between us and the town. The clang of an anvil, or the clamour of a horn, or busy wheelwright's sounds, came faintly up to us when the wind was south.

I must not delay my readers longer with my gossip, but bring them at once into the conversation that preceded our first reading.

MILVERTON. I tell you, Ellesmere, these are the only heights I care to look down from, the heights of natural scenery.

ELLESMERE. Pooh! my dear Milverton, it is only because the particular mounds which the world calls heights, you think you have found out to be but larger ant-heaps. Whenever you have cared about anything, a man more fierce and unphilosophical in the pursuit of it I never saw. To influence men's minds by writing for them, is that no ambition?

MILVERTON. It may be, but I have it not. Let any kind critic convince me that what I am now doing is useless, or has been done before, or that, if I leave it undone, some one else will do it to my mind: and I should fold up my papers, and watch the turnips grow in that field there, with a placidity that would, perhaps, seem very spiritless to your now restless and ambitious nature, Ellesmere.

ELLESMERE. If something were to happen which

will not, then—oh Philosophy, Philosophy, you, too, are a good old nurse, and rattle your rattles for your little people, as well as old Dame World can do for hers. But what are we to have to-day for our first reading?

MILVERTON. An Essay on Truth.

ELLESMERE. Well, had I known this before, it is not the novelty of the subject which would have dragged me up the hill to your house. By the way, philosophers ought not to live upon hills. They are much more accessible, and I think quite as reasonable, when, Diogenes-like, they live in tubs upon flat-ground. Now for the essay.

TRUTH

TRUTH is a subject which men will not suffer to grow old. Each age has to fight with its own falsehoods: each man with his love of saying to himself and those around him pleasant things and things serviceable for to-day, rather than the things which are. Yet a child appreciates at once the divine necessity for truth: never asks, 'What harm is there in saying the thing that is not?' and an old man finds, in his growing experience, wider and wider applications of the great doctrine and discipline of truth.

Truth needs the wisdom of the serpent as well as the simplicity of the dove. He has gone but a little way in his matter who supposes that it is an easy thing for a man to speak the truth, 'the thing he troweth'; and that it is a casual function which may be fulfilled at once after any lapse of exercise. But, in the first place, the man who would speak truth, must know what he troweth. To do that, he must have an uncorrupted judgment. By this is not meant a perfect judgment, or even a wise one, but one which, however it may be biassed, is not bought—is still a judgment. But some people's judgments are, so entirely gained over by vanity, selfishness, passion, or inflated prejudices and fancies long indulged in; or they have the

habit of looking at everything so carelessly, that they see nothing truly. They cannot interpret the world of reality. And this is the saddest form of lying, 'the lie that sinketh in', as Bacon says, which becomes part of the character and goes on eating the rest away.

Again, to speak truth, a man must not only have that martial courage which goes out, with sound of drum and trumpet, to do and suffer great things; but that domestic courage which compels him to utter small-sounding truths in spite of present inconvenience and outraged sensitiveness or sensibility. Then he must not be in any respect a slave to self-interest. Often it seems as if but a little misrepresentation would gain a great good for us; or, perhaps, we have only to conceal some trifling thing, which, if told, might hinder unreasonably, as we think, a profitable bargain. The true man takes care to tell, notwithstanding. When we think that truth interferes at one time or another with all a man's likings, hatings and wishes, we must admit, I think, that it is the most comprehensive and varied form of self-denial.

Then, in addition to these great qualities, truth-telling in its highest sense requires a well-balanced mind. For instance, much exaggeration, perhaps the most, is occasioned by an impatient and easily moved temperament which longs to convey its own vivid impressions to other minds, and seeks by amplifying to gain the full measure of their sympathy. But a true man does not think what his hearers are feeling, but what he is saying.

More stress might be laid, than has been, on the intellectual requisites for truth, which are probably the best part of intellectual cultivation; and as much caused by truth as causing it¹. But, putting the requisites for truth at the fewest, see of how large a portion of the character truth is the resultant. If you were to make a list of those persons accounted the

¹ See *The Statesman*, by Henry Taylor, p. 30.

religious men of their respective ages, you would have a ludicrous combination of characters essentially dissimilar. But true people are kindred. Mention the eminently true men, and you will find that they are a brotherhood. There is a family likeness throughout them.

If we consider the occasions of exercising truthfulness and descend to particulars, we may divide the matter into the following heads—truth to one's self—truth to mankind in general—truth in social relations—truth in business—truth in pleasure.

1. Truth to one's self. All men have a deep interest that each man should tell himself the truth. Not only will he become a better man, but he will understand them better. If men knew themselves, they could not be intolerant to others.

It is scarcely necessary to say much about the advantage of a man knowing himself for himself. To get at the truth of any history is good; but a man's own history—when he reads that truly, and, without a mean and over-solicitous introspection, knows what he is about and what he has been about, it is a bible to him. 'And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned before the Lord.' David knew the truth about himself. But truth to one's self is not merely truth about one's self. It consists in maintaining an openness and justness of soul which brings a man into relation with all truth. For this, all the senses, if you might so call them, of the soul must be uninjured; that is, the affections and the perceptions must be just. For a man to speak the truth to himself comprehends all goodness; and for us mortals can only be an aim.

2. Truth to mankind in general. This is a matter which, as I read it, concerns only the higher natures. Suffice it to say, that the withholding large truths from the world may be a betrayal of the greatest trust.

3. Truth in social relations. Under this head come the practices of making speech vary according to the person spoken to; of pretending to agree with the world when you do not; of not acting according to what is your deliberate and well-advised opinion because some mischief may be made of it by persons whose judgment in the matter you do not respect; of maintaining a wrong course for the sake of consistency; of encouraging the show of intimacy with those whom you never can be intimate with; and many things of the same kind. These practices have elements of charity and prudence as well as fear and meanness in them. Let those parts which correspond to fear and meanness be put aside. Charity and prudence are not parasitical plants which require boles of falsehood to climb up upon. It is often extremely difficult in the mixed things of this world to act truly and kindly too; but therein lies one of the great trials of a man, that his sincerity should have kindness in it, and his kindness truth.

4. Truth in business. The more truth you can get into any business, the better. Let the other side know the defects of yours, let them know how you are to be satisfied, let there be as little to be found out as possible (I should say nothing), and if your business be an honest one, it will be best tended in this way. The talking, bargaining and delaying that would thus be needless, the little that would then have to be done over again, the anxiety that would be put aside, would even in a worldly way be 'great gain'. It is not, perhaps, too much to say, that the third part of men's lives is wasted by the effect, direct or indirect, of falsehoods.

Still, let us not be swift to imagine that lies are never of any service. A recent prime minister said, that he did not know about truth always prevailing and the like; but lies had been very successful against his government. And this was true enough. Every lie has its day. There is no preternatural inefficacy in it

by reason of its falseness. And this is especially the case with those vague injurious reports which are no man's lies, but all men's carelessness. But even as regards special and unmistakeable falsehood, we must admit that it has its success. A complete being might deceive with wonderful effect; however, as nature is always against a liar, it is great odds in the case of ordinary mortals. Wolsey talks of

Negligence
Fit for a fool to fall by,

when he gives Henry the wrong packet; but the Cardinal was quite mistaken. That kind of negligence was just the thing of which far-seeing and thoughtful men are capable; and which, if there were no higher motive, should induce them to rely on truth alone. A very close vulpine nature, all eyes, all ears, may succeed better in deceit. But it is a sleepless business. Yet, strange to say, it is had recourse to in the most spendthrift fashion, as the first and easiest thing that comes to hand.

In connexion with truth in business, it may be observed that if you are a truthful man, you should be watchful over those whom you employ; for your subordinate agents are often fond of lying for your interests, as they think. Show them at once that you do not think with them, and that you will disconcert any of their inventions by breaking in with the truth. If you suffer the fear of seeming unkind to prevent your thrusting well meant inventions aside, you may get as much pledged to falsehoods as if you had coined and uttered them yourself.

5. Truth in pleasure. Men have been said to be sincere in their pleasures; but this is only that the taste and habits of men are more easily discernible in pleasure than in business. The want of truth is as great a hindrance to the one as to the other. Indeed, there is so much insincerity and formality in the

rocks brought down by it being the actions, is too much worked out. When we speak of similes not going on four legs, it implies, I think, that a simile is at best but a four-legged animal. Now this is almost a centipede of a simile. I think I have had the same thought as yours here, and I have compared the life of an individual to a curve. You both smile. Now I thought that Dunsford at any rate would be pleased with this reminiscence of college days. But to proceed with my curve. You may have numbers of the points, through which it passes, given; and yet know nothing of the nature of the curve itself. See, now, it shall pass through here and there, but how it will go in the interval, what is the law of its being, we know not. But this simile would be too mathematical, I fear.

MILVERTON. I hold to the centipede.

ELLESMERE. Not a word has Dunsford said all this time.

DUNSFORD. I like the essay. I was not criticizing as we went along, but thinking that, perhaps, the greatest charm of books is, that we see in them that other men have suffered what we have. Some souls we ever find who could have responded to all our agony, be it what it may. This at least robs misery of its loneliness.

ELLESMERE. On the other hand, the charm of intercourse with our fellows, when we are in sadness, is that they do not reflect it in any way. Each keeps his own trouble to himself, and often pretending to think and care about other things, comes to do so for the time.

DUNSFORD. Well, but you might choose books which would not reflect your troubles.

ELLESMERE. But the fact of having to make a choice to do this, does away, perhaps, with some part of the benefit: whereas, in intercourse with living men, you take what you find, and you find that neither your trouble, nor any likeness of it, is absorbing other people. But this is not the whole reason: the truth is, the life and impulses of other men are catching: